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ABSTRACT

Information was obtained on the use of the University of North Dakota undergraduate catalog to determine whether it influenced a student's decision to attend the university, what it is used for, and whether the uses differ among students according to age, sex, or college. Usable responses to a questionnaire, which is appended, were obtained from 1,031 students in January 1979. On the whole, results indicate that there are other factors more influential than the catalog in the student's decision to attend the university. Between 58 and 78 percent of the respondents always or usually use the catalog for information about degree requirements. Students also refer to the catalog for specific information on housing, financial aid, and student services. The younger students appear to be the largest users of the catalog for obtaining information on student life. It is suggested that some types of information could be minimally covered in the undergraduate catalog and provided under separate cover. (SW)

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USE OF THE UND UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG

1978-1979

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RB-SA-081079

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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AUG 2 5 1980

The Undergraduate Catalog is often regarded as the student's guide to the University. It contains information about major requirements and course offerings, as well as information on other activities at the University and the city itself. Knowing if the catalog influences a student's decision to attend the University of North Dakota will help to define the catalog's purpose in knowing what information the students use from the catalog, and may provide guidelines for future expansion or reduction of coverage in the catalog. This report addresses two questions: 1) Is the Undergraduate Catalog influential in a student's decision to attend UND? and, 2) What is the Undergraduate Catalog used for, and do these uses differ among students characterized by age, sex, or college?

Questionnaires given out at the University of North Dakota were used to gather the information used in this report. Frequencies and crosstabulations describe the catalog's use as a recruitment tool, as well as the student's usage of the catalog.

METHODOLOGY

This research was supported by the Undergraduate Catalog Task Force and was conducted in January, 1979, during two fee payment days for spring semester. Approximately 2,000 questionnaires were given to University of North Dakota students to be completed and returned by mail or when they left the building. (A sample questionnaire is attached as Appendix A). The number of useable questionnaires returned totalled 1,031.

This research is descriptive in nature and details the uses and purposes of the Undergraduate Catalog at UND using frequencies and crosstabulations. Tests of significance are noted in the tables along with gamma co-efficients as measures of association when the level of data is appropriate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Males and females in the undergraduate classes were equally represented in the survey, as can be seen in Appendix A, which shows a sample questionnaire with percentages of respondents answering each question. Most students have or had an undergraduate catalog and use or used it frequently or occasionally. Overall, those students who were familiar with other catalogs rated UND's as above average.

Approximately 450 students felt that the undergraduate catalog was very important or somewhat important in their decision to attend UND. Most students stated the catalog did not make a difference in their decision to attend; most would have attended UND without seeing the catalog. Therefore, in response to the first question regarding using the catalog as a recruitment tool, it appears that there are other factors more influential in the student's decision to attend UND.

For students living in North Dakota before attending college, the decision to attend UND may be affected by in-state tuition and proximity to home. The catalog, then, does not appear to be an extensive recruitment tool and other variables should be looked at to see what influences a person's decision to attend UND.

The second question involves detailing uses of the catalog and differences among specific groups of students in their use of it.

Between 58% to 78% of the respondents always or usually use the catalog for information about degree requirements (see Appendix A). Specific areas in this category included:

1) Majors, Minors, Programs Offered
2) General Graduation Requirements
3) College, Department Major Requirements
4) Admission Requirements
5) Classes to Take.

Between 26% and 41% of the respondents always or usually use the catalog for more specific types of information such as:

1) Enrollment Procedures
2) Housing Information
3) Financial Aid
4) Student Services
5) General Institutional Information

Smaller number of students (12%-22%) always or usually use the catalog for the following types of information:

1) Special Programs, Honors, etc.
2) Career Opportunities
3) Student Life, Activities, etc.
4) Information about the Grand Forks Area

It is evident the catalog is used mostly for determining requirements leading to completion of a degree. Students look to the catalog for specific information on Housing, Financial Aid, and Student Services; therefore, these areas should be covered thoroughly.

Differences in use appear when looking at the students by age, sex, and college. Table 2 indicates that the freshmen and sophomores are the younger students, while those 21 and over make up the upper classes. The older students then cannot be characterized as returning freshman, but instead are the juniors and seniors. Because of the similarities between age and class, we will use age in our analysis to avoid duplication.

Table 1. Crosstabulation of Age by Class in Percentages
(N=992)

CLASS	AGE					
	18	19	20	21	22	23+
Freshmen	89%	31%	8%	2%	5%	11%
Sophomores	9	59	35	11	12	19
Juniors	2	9	50	37	21	24
Seniors	0	1	7	50	62	46
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

$p < .00$
Gamma = .71

Table 2 indicates the trend of students using the catalog more often for general institutional information. The only exception to this is the large number of 23 and older students that "usually" use the catalog for this purpose. An explanation for this could be that this 19-22 group gets more information informally through socializing with other students at school. The freshmen have not yet found informal acquaintences to get this information from, and instead may turn to the catalog for it. The older students may have other responsibilities such as family or work that limit their time to gain this type of information informally from others, resulting in their use of the catalog.

Table 2. Crosstabulation of Age by Use of Catalog for General Institutional Information in Percentages

(N=700)

USE OF CATALOG	AGE					
	18	19	20	21	22	23+
Always	14%	16%	12%	10%	13%	12%
Usually	52	42	29	32	29	41
Seldom	25	26	38	35	27	25
Never	9	16	21	23	31	22
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

$p < .00$

Gamma = .13

As seen in Table 3 the younger students appear to be the largest users of the catalog for obtaining information on student life. The catalog may provide the student's first acquaintence with available activities and groups, with subsequent information coming from other ties formed later in the college years. For this reason, it is possible that this information could be given out to freshmen under separate cover with minimal coverage, if any, given to it in the catalog.

Table 3. Crosstabulations of Age by Use of Catalog for Student Life, Activities, etc., in Percentages

(N=682)

USE FOR STUDENT LIFE	AGE					
	18	19	20	21	22	23+
Always	9%	8%	4%	3%	5%	5%
Usually	47	26	17	13	17	16
Seldom	30	37	47	48	40	32
Never	14	29	32	38	38	47
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

$p < .00$

Gamma =.30

Use of the catalog for information on Grand Forks is low, as can be seen in Table 4 below. It appears that students do not use the catalog extensively for this type of information.

Table 4. Crosstabulation of Age by Use of Catalog for Information on Grand Forks in Percentages

(N=678)

INFORMATION ON GRAND FORKS	AGE					
	18	19	20	21	22	23+
Always	8%	8%	4%	2%	3%	7%
Usually	22	11	12	10	13	10
Seldom	29	31	24	27	31	23
Never	41	50	60	61	53	62
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

$p < .03$

Gamma =.16

Table 5 is a summary of how colleges differ in their use of the Undergraduate Catalog. The table provides the percentages of students in the specific college always or usually using the catalog for a stated purpose (labeled "use"), compared with those who seldom or never use it for that purpose (labeled "non-use"). It appears that those in the University College make more use of the catalog than others. The greatest catalog use within the colleges is for Housing Information. Nursing and HRD along with University College use the catalog the most for information on student life and activities. Information on Special Programs and Student Services from the catalog is fairly consistent, with the exception of less use by Medicine and BPA. These differences may be accounted for by individual departmental correspondence about various services and activities with the students.

Table 5. Summary of Student Use of the Catalog by Colleges

*USES OF THE CATALOG	COLLEGE							
	Arts & Sciences	CTL	Nursing	BPA	Eng. & Mines	HRD	University College	Medicine
Housing								
Use	34%	41%	51%	37%	27%	45%	57%	46%
Non-use	66%	59%	49%	63%	73%	55%	43%	54%
Number	(181)	(58)	(67)	(154)	(70)	(62)	(147)	(26)
Student Life								
Use	22%	23%	29%	19%	18%	34%	54%	14%
Non-use	78%	77%	71%	81%	82%	66%	46%	86%
Number	(155)	(56)	(55)	(130)	(60)	(52)	(134)	(21)
Special Programs								
Use	38%	38%	33%	18%	20%	29%	48%	9%
Non-use	62%	62%	67%	82%	80%	71%	52%	91%
Number	(165)	(56)	(55)	(125)	(63)	(54)	(130)	(22)
Student Services								
Use	33%	37%	40%	26%	38%	31%	56%	23%
Non-use	67%	63%	60%	74%	62%	69%	44%	77%
Number	(163)	(57)	(55)	(136)	(65)	(55)	(134)	(22)

*Use represents those students answering Always or Usually to using the Catalog for getting this information, while Non-use represents those students answering Seldom or Never to using the Catalog for getting this information.

There are few differences between males and females, with the exception of extensive use. Females use the catalog more often (always or usually) than males for career opportunities, student life, and special programs. The men are not non-users of the catalog, but it appears that many of them use the catalog seldom for the same purposes. The differences here could be caused by the unclear definition of always, usually, and seldom. Caution must be taken in interpreting these findings due to the possible ambiguity of the response categories, and possible misinterpretation of the categories used to describe the uses of the catalog.

SUMMARY

Knowing if the Undergraduate Catalog influences students' decisions to attend UND and knowing what students use the catalog for, is useful in indicating areas needing either more thorough coverage or less detail in future issues of the catalog. Those UND students answering the questionnaires were not greatly influenced by the catalog in their decision to attend UND. The greatest student use of the catalog is for information on major requirements and course offerings.

Because some areas of the catalog are used mostly by freshmen and older students, one suggestion is to minimize the coverage of these areas in the catalog and provide this information to those students under separate cover. These areas include information on Grand Forks, and student life and activities.

The catalog is being used by students once they are at UND. Ongoing studies to define changing uses of the catalog would indicate areas needing more detailed information as well as areas that could be reduced in the catalog and sent to certain students separately.

Appendix A

Return by Campus Mail to: V. P. Student Affairs
Twamley Hall

University of North Dakota
Undergraduate Catalogue Questionnaire

N=1,031

Many people and agencies at the University of North Dakota are working to improve campus services for students. To accomplish this goal we need your assistance. Your answer to the following questions will help us to publish an Undergraduate University of North Dakota Catalogue that is responsive to your needs.

1 Classification
(1) 25 Freshman
(2) 25 Sophomore
(3) 23 Junior
(4) 23 Senior
(5) 2 Special
2 missing

2 Sex
(1) 54 Female
(2) 45 Male
1 missing

3 Type of Student
(1) 15 New student
(2) 76 Previous UND student
(3) 8 Transfer student
1 missing

4 Age
(1) 17 18
(2) 20 19
(3) 17 20
(4) 16 21
(5) 10 22
(6) 19 23+
1 missing

5 College
(1) 24 Arts & Sciences
(2) 7 CTL
(3) 8 Nursing
(4) 19 BPA
(5) 9 Eng. & Mines
(6) 8 HRD
(7) 18 Univ. Col.
(8) 1 Fine Arts
(9) 3 Medicine
3 missing

6 Do you have or have you had a UND Undergraduate Catalogue? (1) 94 Yes (2) 4.5 No 1.5 missing

7 If yes, where did you obtain it? (1) 4 Career Day (2) 10 High school (3) 49 Requested from UND (4) 17 Visit to UND campus (5) 4 friend, parent, etc. (6) 10 other
6 missing

8 To what extent did/do you use the Catalogue? (1) 39 frequently; (2) 47 occasionally; (3) 9 rarely; (4) 1 never 4 missing

For what purpose(s) did/do you use the Catalogue and to what extent was the information helpful?
Please check the appropriate spaces:

		(1) Always	(2) Usually	(3) Seldom	(4) Never	Missing
9	admission requirements	25	33	16	8	18
10	enrollment procedures	14	27	22	14	23
11	housing information	8	24	26	18	24
12	financial aid information	11	26	20	19	24
13	majors/minors/programs offered	47	31	6	2	14
14	general graduation requirements	43	32	7	2	16
15	College-departmental-major requirements	41	33	6	3	17
16	classes to take	32	31	14	5	18
17	special programs, honors, etc.	6	16	24	21	33
18	student services (health, financial aid, counseling, activities, etc.)	6	20	27	16	31
19	career opportunities	5	16	25	21	33
20	student life, activities, etc.	4	15.5	25.5	21	34
21	information on the Grand Forks area	3	9	18	35	35
22	general institutional information	9	26	20	13	32
23	other (please list) _____ (5)	2	5	3	5	85
	_____	—	—	—	—	
	_____	—	—	—	—	

24 Did you use the Catalogue to compare UND with other institutions? (1) 44 yes; (2) 52 no 4 missing

25 If yes, to what extent was the information in the Catalogue important in your decision to attend UND? (1) 11 very important; (2) 33 somewhat important; (3) 9 not important. 47 missing

26 Did the Catalogue make a difference in your decision to attend UND? (1) 20 yes; (2) 73 no. 7 missing
Please comment: _____

27 Would you have attended UND without seeing a Catalogue? (1) 69.5 yes; (2) 23.5 no. 7 missing

28 Overall, how would you rate UND's Catalogue in comparison with other college catalogues with which you are familiar? (1) 5 superior; (2) 34 above average; (3) 31 average; (4) 7 below average; (5) 2 inferior; (6) 21 not familiar with other catalogues.
8.1 missing